

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (currently amended) A program controlled system for transmitting tax related data to a selected financial institution, reporting the data, and remitting funds corresponding to the data[, over an interactive communications network,] to a selected government authority over an interactive communications network, the system comprising:

a first function for receiving an XML-based transaction request from a program controlled [tax computation] system for computation of sales and/or use tax including sales and/or use tax for payments and accruals, verifying the validity of the request and replying to the system with an XML response;

a second function for transforming the transaction request into a master XML-based request file and storing the master request file in a database;

a third function for notifying an authorized third party to validate any request requiring approval prior to transmission of the tax related information file to the financial institution;

a fourth function for transforming the master XML-based request file to a TXP-based file and locating the file in an outbox for retrieval by the financial institution;

a fifth function for permitting the financial institution to securely and automatically retrieve the TXP-based file from the outbox; and

a sixth function for securely logging and allowing the third party to review the TXP-based file.

Claim 2 (currently amended) A program controlled apparatus for transmitting tax related data to a selected financial institution, reporting the data, and remitting funds corresponding to the data to a selected government authority over an interactive communications network, the apparatus comprising:

a first function for receiving an XML-based transaction request from a program controlled [tax computation] system for computation of sales and/or use tax including sales and/or use tax for payments and accruals and replying to the system with an XML-based response including a transaction identifier;

a second function for verifying the validity of the XML-based request of the tax computation system and storing the valid transaction request in a database;

a third function for transforming the request into a master XML-based request and storing the master request in the database;

a fourth function for notifying an authorized third party to validate any request requiring approval prior to transmitting the tax related data;

a fifth function for building a total XML-based file and transforming the file into a first TXP-based file for remitting information associated with the file over an automated clearinghouse network to a selected government authority, and for copying the first TXP-based file to an outbox file for secure and automatic access by the financial institution;

a sixth function for receiving the first TXP-based file as a first TXP-based receipt file in an inbox file subsequent to processing of the first TXP-based file by the financial institution; and

a seventh function for decrypting the first TXP-based receipt file, for storing the decrypted file as a second TXP-based receipt file in the database, and for substantially deleting the first TXP-based file and the first TXP-based receipt file from the outbox file and inbox file, respectively.

Claim 3 (currently amended) A program controlled apparatus for transmitting tax related data to a selected financial institution, reporting the data, and remitting funds corresponding to the data to a selected government authority over an interactive communications network, the system comprising:

a first function for receiving an XML-based transaction request from a [tax computation] system for computation of sales and/or use tax including sales and/or use tax for payments and accruals and replying with an XML-based response including a transaction identifier;

a second function for verifying the validity of the XML-based request of the tax computation system and storing the valid transaction request in a database;

a third function for transforming the request into a master XML-based request and storing the master request in the database;

a fourth function for notifying an authorized third party to validate any request requiring approval prior to transmitting the tax related data;

a fifth function for building a total XML-based file and transforming the file into a first TXP-based file for remitting information associated with the file to a selected government agency, and for copying the first TXP-based file to an outbox file for secure and automatic access by the financial institution;

a sixth function for receiving the first TXP-based file as a first TXP-based receipt file in an inbox file subsequent to processing of the first TXP-based file by the financial institution; and

a seventh function for decrypting the first TXP-based receipt file, for storing the decrypted file as a second TXP-based receipt file in the database, and for replacing each first TXP-based file and the first TXP-based receipt file in the outbox file and inbox file, respectively, with a null file.

Claim 4 (currently amended) A [program controlled apparatus] method for transmitting tax related data to a selected financial institution, reporting the data, and remitting funds corresponding to the data to a selected government authority over an interactive communications network, the [apparatus performing a] method [which] comprises the steps of:

inputting an XML-based transaction request to [the] a program controlled apparatus from a [tax computation] system for computation of sales and/or use tax including sales and/or use tax for payments and accruals, the apparatus transmitting the tax related data to the selected financial institution, reporting the data, and remitting the funds corresponding to the data to the selected government authority;

the apparatus reading the request and writing data of the request in a selected XML-based input file of a database;

the apparatus parsing the input file to determine whether the XML-based transaction request is valid;

if the request is invalid, then the apparatus creating an XML-based file including the request and error, and sending the file as a response to the tax computation system;

if the request is valid, then the apparatus determining the type of request being made;

if the request is a status request, then the apparatus extracting a transaction identifier from the request, retrieving a file from the database containing the current automated clearinghouse network status and other data for the request, creating an XML-based response to the request to indicate that the request has been successful, and sending the response to the tax computation system;

if the request is a remittance request, then the apparatus determining whether all required elements of the request are non-blank, and if all required elements of the request are non-blank, then determining whether the amount of tax computed is valid; and if the amount of tax computed is valid, then determining whether the message identifier in the request is unique, and if the message identifier is unique, then storing the request in a log file of the database, retrieving the transaction identifier for the request from the database, creating a file including the request and transaction identifier to indicate that the request has been successful, and sending the file to the tax computation system; and

if at least one required element of the request is blank, or if the amount of tax computed is invalid, or if the message identifier is not unique, then the apparatus creating an XML-based file including the request and error to indicate that the request is erroneous, and sending the file to the tax computation system.

Claim 5 (currently amended) A [program controlled apparatus] method for transmitting tax related data to a selected financial institution, reporting, and remitting funds corresponding to[t] the data to a selected government authority over an interactive communications network, the [apparatus creating a master XML-based file by a] method [which] compris[es]ing the steps of:

retrieving a log file from a database of a program controlled apparatus from a system for computation of sales and/or use tax including sales and/or use tax for payments and accruals, the apparatus transmitting the tax related data to the selected financial institution, reporting the data and remitting the funds corresponding to the data to the selected government authority, the database indicating that a successful request for remittance of tax related information has been made;

the apparatus creating a master XML-based transaction request file;

storing the master XML-based file in the log file of the database; and

accessing an XML-based network status file from the database and updating the file to indicate that the master XML-based file has been created in the log file.

Claim 6 (currently amended) A [program controlled apparatus] method for transmitting tax related data to a selected financial institution, reporting the data, and remitting funds corresponding to the data[, over an interactive communications network,] to a selected government authority over an interactive communications network, the [apparatus creating an automated clearinghouse network file by a] method [which] compris[es]ing the steps of:

determining whether a TXP-based file for an automated clearinghouse network and created by a program controlled apparatus is present in an outbox of a system for receiving an XML-based transaction request from a [tax computation] system for computation of sales and/or use tax including sales and/or use tax for payments and accruals and converting the request to a TXP-based file for the network, the apparatus transmitting the tax related data to the selected financial institution, reporting the data, and remitting the funds corresponding to the data over the network;

if a TXP-based file for the network is detected in the outbox, then performing no conversion [is performed] on the TXP-based file;

if no TXP-based file for the network is detected in the outbox, then selecting a sequence number for updating an XML-based file;

if a request from the tax computation system has not been processed, then retrieving a master XML-based request file from a database which has an automated clearinghouse network approval status;

combining the retrieved master XML-based request file with a total XML-based request file;

converting the total XML-based file to a TXP-based file for the network;

storing the total XML-based file and TXP-based file in a log file of the database;

updating a status file for the network in the database to indicate that a TXP-based file for the network has been created for XML-based transaction requests in the master XML-based request file; and

deleting the total XML-based request file.